

Traffic Commission Minutes
October 19, 2017

Meeting was held at the Tufts Administrative Building, 167 Holland St, 2nd floor

Meeting was called to order by the Chair at 5:30pm

Attendance: Stan Koty, Thomas Graney, Lt. Polito, Robert McWatters, Lena Webb

Staff: Laura Accaputo, Suzanne Rinfret, Anna Rebelo, Terence Smith, Mike Tremblay, Adam Polinski, Vithal Deshpande, Nancy Salamoun, Cortni Desir

Other: Alderman Niedergang, Alderman Rossetti, Mark Chase, Tom Taylor, Ken Carlson, Christine Dibuono, Alex Frieden, Allison Frieden, Tom Lamar, Scott Kirkwood

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:30pm

Alderman McWatters called for a moment of silence in honor of Officer Remigio

Alderman McWatters made a motion to dedicate the meeting to Officer Remigio, 2nd by the Chair.

Motion passed: 5-0

Item #1 – Minutes from the September 19, 2017 Traffic Commission Meeting accepted unanimously

Alderman McWatters made a motion to suspend the rules and take some agenda items out of order, 2nd by the Chair. Motion passed: 5-0

Item #3 – Request from the BOA to consider revising the rules for the renewal of residential parking permits and consider fee proration for periods less than a full year.

- Alderman Rossetti stated Suzanne Rinfret appeared before the Board of Alderman to explain the permitting process. Many residents have reached out to the Aldermen to complain about being charged for 12 months for a permit valid for less than 12 months. She believes there is no fairness with this policy and is asking for pro-ration of the permit fees.
- Suzanne Rinfret explained the adverse impacts of proration, such as the potential elimination of online ordering which will be burdensome for constituents. She believes more discussion will be required before any decisions are made.
- The Chair suggested tabling the request until the next meeting and convening the meeting ½ hour earlier at 5pm.

The Chair made a motion to Table the request, 2nd by Thomas Graney. Motion passed: 5-0

Item#4 – Request for (3) 30 Minute Parking spaces from 8am-6pm, except by permit; Permit Parking Only 6pm-8am
290 Highland Av

- Scott Kirkwood was recognized by the Chair to speak on the issue. Mr. Kirkwood stated he was wrapping up a project at this location; the building has 8 units with 1 commercial space. He explained tenants interested in the commercial space are concerned the existing 2 hour

restriction will prohibit patronage to the business. He believes the 30 minute except by permit spaces will allow turnover without inhibiting residents.

- Alderman Niedergang stated he was in favor of the request and noted the benefits of more parking for residents while promoting the growing commercial district on Highland Av. He also noted this will satisfy a ZBA requirement which was granted a waiver during the application process.

Alderman McWatters made a motion to approve, 2nd by Lt. Polito. Motion passed: 5-0.

The Chair took Item 10 and Item 11 together

Item #10 – Request to allow two way bicycling on Hancock St between Charnwood Rd and Elm St and waive the 3 week advertising period

Item #11 – Request to allow two way bicycling on the Gilman St/Oliver St corridor between Walnut St and Glen St and waive the 3 week advertising period

- Terence Smith stated Traffic and Parking supports the concept and requested detailed plans with pavement markings and compliant signage.
- Mike Tremblay stated research shows this concept is very safe and crashes are more likely without contra flow.
- Lena Webb read an email she sent to commission members in support of this request into the record.
- Alderman McWatters stated he supports the concept and asked if there was a plan in place for markings. Mike Tremblay stated there were conceptual drawings and added there would be no bike lanes installed without proper markings and signage.

Alderman McWatters made a motion to approve pending approval of demarcations by Terence Smith, 2nd by the Chair. Motion passed: 5-0.

Item #2 – Request for Parking for Electric Vehicles Only (Charging Stations) at the following metered spaces:

- a) Broadway @ Magoun Square Lot between CVS and Dunkin Donuts (2 spaces)
 - b) 6 Newbury St next to the rear of the fire station (2 spaces)
 - c) 19 Broadway, Mt. Vernon Lot, first two parking spaces
- Alderman Niedergang stated the lot in Magoun Square is heavily used and asked for the rationale of this location.
 - Vithal Deshpande explained the location was determined based on demand and convenience to electric supply as well as the amount of available spaces.
 - The Chair asked if the spaces could be located closer to the business permit spaces in the back of the lot and Mr. Deshpande explained the challenge with that is the power supply would come from CVS so they would need their permission. Alderman Niedergang stated he thinks locating near the business permits is a good suggestion especially since finding parking in Magoun Square is difficult.
 - The Chair also asked about more visible locations such as near Dunkin Donuts. Mr. Deshpande explained visibility is not an issue, the issue is the further away they are placed from the power supply the more costly they will be. He agreed to look into the cost of the alternate location in Magoun Square.

- Thomas Graney asked if there will be more requests of this type in the future and Mr. Deshpande stated requests will increase. The Chair noted the city wants to expand the program and are trying to find the best locations. They are currently working with Assembly Row and other useful areas and will get funding from the state.

Thomas Graney made a motion to approve, pending a viable alternate location for Magoun Square, 2nd by the Chair. Motion passed: 5-0.

Item #12 – Request to remove all parking spaces along Webster Av between Prospect St and the Cambridge City Line, with the exception of the handicapped parking space at 61 Webster Av and waive the 3 week advertising period, to allow for construction of protected bicycle lanes.

- Mike Tremblay stated Webster Av is the second most popular bike route in the city, bike counts were conducted by the Somerville Bike Committee. He explained there is no bike infrastructure and road rage making it unsafe. There was support for the request at a community meeting and Alderman Heuston also supports the request.
- Terence Smith stated Traffic and Parking has no objection to the request.

Alderman McWatters made a motion to approve, 2nd by the Chair. Motion passed: 5-0.

Item #13 – Prior Business

- Review the restriction for Do Not Enter 7am-9am and 4pm-6pm, except city residents and bicycles on Mt. Vernon St from Pearl St to Broadway, approved for a 90 day trial in June 2017
 - Review the Loading Zone on Merriam St, between Somerville Av and the residential driveway approximately 75ft south of Somerville Av, Tuesday and Thursday 10am-1pm, approved for a 90 day trial in June 2017
 - Review the Residential Permit Parking space on 40 Merriam St, formally a loading zone, approved for a 90 day trial in June 2017
- Terence Smith stated Traffic and Parking hasn't received complaints for any of the above restrictions and has no objection to permanent approval.

Alderman McWatters made a motion to approve, 2nd by the Chair. Motion passed: 5-0.

The Chair returned the agenda back to order.

Item #5 – Request for removal of the loading zone at 18 Highland Av and replace with two hour parking except by permit 8am-2:30am; permit parking only 2:30am to 8am

Terence Smith stated there was a business at this location but the relocated and the property is now being converted to condos. This restriction will be consistent with the rest of Highland Av.

Alderman McWatters made a motion to approve, 2nd by Lt. Polito. Motion passed: 5-0.

Item #6 – Request for Handicapped Parking

- 25 Willoughby St
- 78 Grant St
- 64 Puritan Rd
- 279 Medford St
- Summer St at the Dilboy Post

- Terence Smith stated Traffic and Parking has no objection to a,b,c. Traffic and Parking does not support d as the applicant is a tenant and is allowed to park in the driveway.

Alderman McWatters made a motion to split the item and approve Item 6a,b,c, 2nd by the Chair.

Motion passed: 5-0

Alderman McWatters made a motion to approve Item 6d for a 90 day trial period, 2nd by the Chair.

Motion passed: 5-0.

- Terence Smith explained Item 6e is a request for public handicapped space and will be addressed by the Disability Coordinator Nancy Salamoun.
- Ms. Salamoun explained this space is temporary during construction of the parking lot, expected completion in July 2018.

Alderman McWatters made a motion to approve, 2nd by Lana Webb. Motion passed: 5-0.

Item #7 – Request for Do Not Enter onto Durham St from Beacon St from 7am-9am and 4pm-6pm, except city residents and bicycles

- Terence Smith stated Traffic and Parking had no objection to the request.

Alderman McWatters made a motion to approve, 2nd by Thomas Graney. Motion passed: 5-0.

Item #8 Request for a Pick Up/Drop Off Pilot Program in Davis Square including the following changes:

- Replace the (3) existing 15 minute parking spaces at 212 Elm St to Pick Up/Drop Off – Live Parking Only (all hours)
 - Add Live Parking Only 5pm-8am to the Loading Zone at 411 Highland Av (Magpie)
 - Add Live Parking Only 5pm-8am at the Loading Zone at 30 Holland St (Statue Park)
- Suzanne Rinfret explained at the last meeting Sgt. Gobiell expressed his concerns that this request would slight taxis. She stated this restriction would be different from a taxi stand as it doesn't solicit business. She also noted taxis would be able to utilize these spaces. LYFT and UBER will put these spaces on their app.
 - The Chair stated the signs must very clearly convey the spaces are strictly pick up/drop off.
 - Lt. Polito stated his concerns that UBER and LYFT do not move when directed to by police.
 - Cortni Desir stated these spaces are not restricted to just UBER and LYFT and will be properly signed. She noted Traffic and Infrastructure did a study of double parking in Davis Square which is a safety concern, especially double parking in travel lanes, as a baseline to measure the effectiveness of these restrictions. She noted an analysis of 2 hours of video on a Friday night showed 12 instances of double parking.
 - Lt. Polito asked if there will be time limits on the signs and asked how long they will be allowed to live park. He noted it cannot be enforced without a time limit.
 - Lena Webb stated her concern they will wait in the space until they get a call. Suzanne Rinfret stated that is not the intention and she would have the signage approved by the Police Department. Ms. Webb stated enforcement of UBER and LYFT will be important.
 - The Chair suggested Cortni Desir, Lt. Polito, Suzanne Rinfret, and Terence Smith meet to iron out the details and also requested a copy of the video study be provided to Alderman McWatters and the Traffic and Parking Department.

Alderman McWatters made a motion to Table, 2nd by Thomas Graney. Motion passed: 5-0.

Item #9 – Request to evaluate the intersection of Dimick St and Marion St for the addition of stop signs

- Terence Smith stated he reviewed this intersection. The installation of stop signs is governed by the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). The MUTCD is a federal, state, and city standard. The MUTCD is specific on where stop signs can be installed at intersections. Stop signs can only be installed on the minor street intersecting a major street. At this intersection Dimick St is the major street and Marion St is the minor Street and therefore a stop sign cannot be installed on Dimick St.

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:10pm was made by Alderman McWatters, 2nd by the Chair.

Motion passed: 5-0.